

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office action dated May 31, 2006. Claims 1-18 are pending in the application. By the present amendment, claims 1, 9, 11, 17 and 18 have been amended. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection in view of the amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

By the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the specification. The Applicant has amended the specification accordingly. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the claims. The claims have been amended to address the Examiner's issues. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0267625 to Feng et al. (hereinafter Feng).

Feng is directed to a system that permits a publisher to "push" information out to a select group of people (see paragraph [0033]). If the people so invited chose to, they can subscribe to the published information pushed to them and become subscribers. If they choose not to subscribe, the publisher and would-be subscribers have no further dealings regarding that published subject matter. Nowhere in Feng is a system or method described where a publisher or subscriber accesses the other's address cards or other information by using a retrieval request without invitation to access such information. Instead, information is made available to a select group and the group selects whether they wish to receive the limited information being pushed to them.

In stark contrast, which is further clarified by the present amendments, claim 1 now recites, *inter alia*, a method for allowing the sharing of social relationships collections including ... allowing a second user to retrieve said social relationship collection object using a retrieval request by the second user without invitation by the first user.

Unlike Feng, a second user wanting information about social relationships of a first user pulls the information from the first user without the first user having to act. While the first user may employ permissions or institute security measures, the first user otherwise remains passive during the access process.

The second user selects when to access the information by issuing the retrieval request for the first user's collection object. As set forth in paragraphs [0028] – [0030] of the present specification, a retrieval request is made by the second user for a social relationship collection object of a first user. If the collection object exists, the second user will be able to access the collection object. No teaching or suggestion of such an element is provided in Feng.

Instead, as described above, Feng permits a subscriber to send out information (like an advertisement) to line up subscribers. The potential subscribers subscribe to such information or not depending on their preferences. The subscribers are active in the process. This can be seen most apparently in Feng at paragraphs [0078]-[0082] and FIG. 2A, which describe this process of resource sharing. As the Examiner states, the publisher being the first user in Feng can send lists out to subscribers, but, in Feng, the subscribers cannot without invitation access such lists of the publisher (the first user).

The Examiner cites paragraph [0125] to show that a member/subscriber is able to view an address card of the publisher. However, upon review of paragraph [0125], Feng states that

information may be shared between subscribers and publishers and goes on to state in paragraph [0126] that when an address card is sent by a member, the recipient receives a publish offer, which upon acceptance permits the recipient access to the address card. Such description supports the Applicants' position that action is required (e.g., an invitation) by the publisher (first user) before the subscriber is granted limited access to only that piece of information.

While similarities exist regarding the updating of contact lists, nowhere in Feng can social relationship collection objects be accessed by allowing a second user to retrieve the social relationship collection object using a retrieval request by the second user without invitation by the first user.

Since Feng fails to disclose or suggest all of the elements of claim 1, claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons stated. Claims 9 and 17 include similar recitations and are also believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 2 and 10 are also believed to be in condition for allowance due at least to their dependencies from claims 1 and 9, respectively.

Regarding claim 18, a method for allowing a first organization to enable a second organization to use social relationship collection objects of the first organization is recited. A first organization allows a second organization to “surf” and access its social relationship collection objects. The step of configuring and installing a server at the first organization to handle requests from the users of the second organization such that retrieval requests from the second organization are made without invitation by the first organization is now recited. Claim 18 now includes a similar recitation as amended claim 1. Claim 18 is therefore believed to be

in condition for allowance for at least the above-stated reasons.

Reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

By the Office Action, claims 3-4 and 11-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Feng in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,549,912 to Chen (hereinafter Chen).

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection. Chen is directed to a completely different system with a completely different application. Chen fails to cure the deficiencies of Feng as set forth above. Therefore, claims 3-4 and 11-12 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the stated reasons. Reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

By the Office Action, claims 6-7 and 14-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Feng in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0148346 to Weaver et al. (hereinafter Weaver), and claims 5, 8, 13 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Feng in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2005/0015432 to Cohen (hereinafter Cohen).

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections. The cited references of Weaver and/or Cohen fail to cure the deficiencies of Feng as set forth above. Reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Therefore, claims 3-8 and 11-16 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the stated reasons and due to their dependencies from claims 1 and 9 respectively. Reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

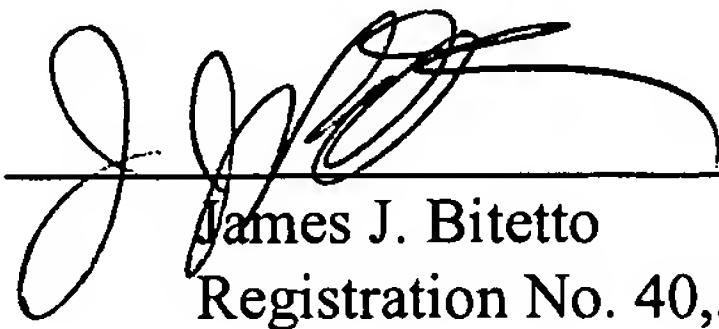
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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration of the case is respectfully requested.

It is believed that no additional fees or charges are currently due. However, in the event that any additional fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the application, they may be charged to applicant's IBM Deposit Account No. 50-0510.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 8/30/06

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